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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001543

SIPDIS

POSTS FOR DHS, CONS AND POL  
STATE FOR WHA/CEN, CA/FPP, G/TIP, AND DS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SMIG](#) [PHUM](#) [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [KHLs](#) [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [EFIN](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TWELVE ILLEGAL CHINESE NATIONALS VIOLENTLY FREED  
FROM GOH MIGRATION'S DETENTION CENTER

Ref: Tegucigalpa 002878,  
Tegucigalpa 00116,  
Tegucigalpa 00070 (NOTAL) and previous

1. SUMMARY: On June 13, 2004 two armed individuals broke into the detention center at GOH Migration in Tegucigalpa. They freed twelve People's Republic of China (PRCs) nationals apprehended early in 2004 and six South Americans. END SUMMARY.

2. Since November 2003, GOH investigative and migration authorities have intercepted over 25 illegal PRCs using forged Indonesian, Taiwanese, Japanese and Great Britain passports. Some were traveling with their PRC passports but had false GOH visas printed. These intercepts and the arrest of four smugglers represented an important impact on the smuggling organization. On June 13, 2004, at about 1640 hours, two armed individuals broke into the GOH Migration detention facility, reduced four migration and frontier officials to impotency, and fled with twelve PRCs and six South Americans. Late at night on June 13, 2004, the captors released two of the South Americans. Their statements however, did not shed much light on the location of the PRCs or the organization that freed them.

3. On Wednesday, June 16, 2004, the GOH's Attorney General issued warrants to search six local businesses owned by PRCs known for their participation in the smuggling of PRCs into Honduras and the United States. An anonymous telephone call, however, revealed that the location of the PRCs was Rio Hondo, a village located some 16 miles from Tegucigalpa. Authorities were thus able to recapture the twelve PRCs, and the owner of the property where the PRCs were found was also arrested. Surprisingly, the subject was released after providing the name of an individual who has been known by post officials to be involved in the theft of 1600 Honduran passports in 2001. Post learned that after his release, the owner of the Rio Hondo property killed a neighbor in Rio Hondo. As of the date of this cable, the owner of the Rio Hondo property and the subject identified by him remain at large.

4. On Thursday, June 17, 2004, two more South Americans were intercepted in a poor hotel in Tegucigalpa. Interviews of these aliens indicated that the operation of their captors was only directed at the PRCs. Therefore, the captors released the South Americans.

5. Interviews of the PRCs with the assistance of officials from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement suboffice at post have provided local authorities with additional information about the members of this smuggling organization and their associates in the escape from the detention facility.

6. COMMENT: This is an exceptional case where all the different investigative agencies in Honduras have worked together in an investigation of organized crime. GOH Migration has experienced serious difficulties in obtaining PRC documents from the PRC Consulate in Mexico City. Consequently, and in furtherance of U.S. interests, GOH Migration has kept the PRCs in custody for periods well above the 40-day limit authorized under current law. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement office (ICE) at post provided GOH Migration with funding for the repatriation of the recaptured PRCs. END COMMENT

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